

Higher education for Mackenzie

**Bishop PICHE opens Grandin College at Fort Smith
— Traces history and Aims of College — Administrator Orange praises enterprise.**

More than two hundred guests attended the official opening and dedication of Grandin College, Fort Smith (Vicariate of Mackenzie), North Western Territories, on June 18th. The guests were welcomed by Most Rev. Paul PICHE, Vicar Apostolic, who outlined the history and aims of the Institution. The ribbon was cut by Father Lucian CASTERMAN, Oblate Provincial of Mackenzie.

The Administrator of Mackenzie District, Mr. R.J. Orange, spoke of the establishment of Grandin College as the «greatest single development in the history of the community, firmly establishing Fort Smith as the Education Centre for the North».

Other guests attending the opening were Mr. and Mrs. B.C. Gillie, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. and Mrs. Dodds, Area Administrator; Chief and Mrs. Gibot of the Chipewyan Indian Band; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Morin of Morin Construction and Engineering, the building contractor; Rev. J.R.C. Ding, Pastor of Fort Smith Anglican Church; Inspector and Mrs. J.B. Giroux of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Provincial and Assistant Provincial of the Grey Nuns, Mother A. Gauthier and Sister P. Fortier.

ADRESS OF BISHOP PICHE

Bishop Piché in thanking the guests for their presence, said that it was a token of encouragement

for the staff and students. Before calling on Fr. Casterman to cut the ribbon, he outlined briefly the history and aims of the College.

The first building, said Bishop Piché was erected by Fr. Robert HARAMBURU, then Provincial of Mackenzie, and called after the first Bishop of Mackenzie, Vital GRANDIN, who established the first school in the Northwest Territories in 1867 with the help of the Grey Nuns. They were the first white women in the North who devoted themselves to the health and welfare of the native children in Fort Providence.

Twelve boys were admitted to Grandin Home in September, 1960. Enrolled in Grades V to VIII, they attended, as the Grandin Home boys still do, the Joseph Burr Tyrell School in Fort Smith. In 1963, the number of admissions had increased to 22, but many more applications had to be turned down. Hence, the Vicariate, conscious of its responsibility in providing education for the native population, undertook the building of a larger student residence with the name of Grandin College.

The new College opened its doors in September, 1964, with forty students coming from all parts of the Vicariate, from the Artic Ocean to the Southern corner. The former Grandin Home became the Girls' Residence of the College. All students followed classes at the Joseph Burr Tyrell Federal School.

Continued Bishop Piché: « We have waited until this day for the solemn Benediction and Official Opening in order to have the ceremony presided over by the immediate representative of the Holy Father in Canada, the first benefactor of the Institution ».

The aim of the College, said the Vicar Apostolic, « is to train for responsibility and leadership, boys and girls desirous of higher education and talented enough to enable them to give a greater contribution

to the Church and country. It is the conviction of the promoters of this institution that the future of the North rests on the youth born in this country and destined to remain and establish themselves in the Territories ».

« It is our hope », continued His Excellency, « that the future Bishops of Mackenzie, as well as the future missionaries — Fathers, Brothers and Sisters — will be chosen from among the citizens of the North. We hope that the day will come when the position of Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Administrators of Mackenzie and all the government representatives here tonight will be filled by the young men who will have the ambition and courage to prepare themselves for these responsibilities ».

He said that it is not enough to give today's youth of the North the same educational opportunities and training of those of the South, but « let us give them the greatest possible educational help and opportunities ». By providing even greater help, he said, « we could discourage and help eliminate the army of drop-outs, who given the proper opportunities and help could have completed at least their Matriculation Course, and incite others to follow them ».

The Vicar Apostolic said that what the youth of Mackenzie needed was an appealing school life, proper facilities for recreation, social and intellectual activity and a spiritual and moral guidance in accordance with their faith. These aims he hoped to achieve through Grandin College in collaboration with the Joseph Burr Tyrrell Federal School, who were most competent in their teaching work and to whom the Bishop expressed his appreciation and thanks.

The College, in its present stage is but a home for the forty youngsters who attend it, maintained by charity. Among the principal benefactors were the Holy See, the Oblates, the Grey Nuns and many

Canadian and American Bishops. He said that to ease the financial burden somewhat, the boys at Grandin had agreed to do certain menial tasks such as cleaning the house and other domestic work.

“ This is indeed a humble beginning for a College ” continued Bishop Piché. “ Nevertheless, it is our hope that the College will soon reach the status of Junior College, with the organization of two additional year courses in secondary education leading to University entrance ”.

ADDRESS OF MR. R. J. ORANGE, ADMINISTRATOR OF MACKENZIE

Your Excellency:

In asking me to participate in the official opening of Grandin College you have extended not only to myself but the people of Fort Smith a most high honour. I know I speak for all here tonight when I extend to you and the Oblate Fathers of the Mackenzie our sincere congratulations on this most auspicious occasion.

I bring to you the greetings, best wishes and congratulations of the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, the Hon. Arthur Laing, the Deputy Minister, Mr. Côté, and the Director of the Northern Administration Branch, Mr. Carter.

Tonight Northern Education has reached another plateau, with wide new vistas opening to Northern Youth. In many ways the circle of State and Church participation in Education has been completed. Initially, as we know, the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches took on the responsibility for the education of the young Northerner. As Bishop Piché mentioned earlier, education in the North was started by the Churches almost a hundred years ago. In Hay River, in Providence, in Fort Resolution

and in Aklavik the Church authorities, through their own resources, provided education to as many of the young people as they could accommodate. This was before the State recognized and acknowledged its responsibility in this area. Then in conjunction with the Church the system was expanded to ensure that universal education became an objective. This is now quickly becoming a reality. To illustrate the problems and difficulties at that time: 10 years ago only 15-18% of the children living in the Mackenzie District were attending school today that total has reached 85-90%. To make this comparison more dramatic it should be realized that in this same period the actual school age population has doubled.

Regardless of the statistical significance of these figures, it is recognized that there are many gaps in the system, not the least of which is the difficulty facing the adults, who see about them the many cultural, technological and social changes and yet do not understand their significance and meaning and are finding it most difficult to accept.

We then have the problem of what happens to the young person who is partially educated but who, because of circumstances — in many instances beyond his control — has left school having neither the training and the skill to fit into wage employment, nor the training, interest or desire to return to the traditional way of life. Incidentally, this problem is not unique to Northern Canada as it exists elsewhere in the nation. But the fact remains it is with us and somehow we must face up to it.

Under the present system many of our children must leave their homes to attain their education. Because of the rapidly expanding school population in the higher grades, the hostel system brings together youngsters from the early grades to the senior high school levels. It is with respect to the older children that we are now faced with another

serious problem, one which has not been fully understood by the State. I believe that you cannot expect to give the teen-ager the attention and understanding as effectively as you might, in the hostel setting where the age spread is as extensive as it is under present conditions.

It is with respect to these most important young people that Bishop Piché in his wisdom has founded Grandin College. By bringing together youth of the North who are anxious to continue their education and have shown the ability to do so, His Excellency has recognized the gap and the results are what we see about us tonight, Grandin College.

We know up to the present time the State has not participated in any way in the development of this institution. The costs of building the College have been borne by the Church authorities. The same applies to the maintenance of the students. Last year a proposal was placed before the Council of the Northwest Territories whereby the College would receive financial assistance in an amount equal to the costs of maintaining the youngsters in school hostels. In effect they were not asking for any special recognition, but rather were saying to the Council that in developing a program to meet a need not now provided by the State, but for which the State has already acknowledged responsibility, Grandin College should receive recognition in the form of limited financial aid. The Council deferred their decision on the matter and have not as yet chosen to discuss it further. I am hopeful that this important matter can be concluded satisfactorily and in the near future.

However, the real meaning of Grandin College is only partially as I have described up to this point. Grandin College is intended and will be the first college of the North. It is the Bishop's plan that when time and circumstances permit University

courses will be taught and, more important, will be available to Northern Residents — I believe that in this lies the future of Northern Education — where we (and I speak as a Northerner) will be able to attract into the North and into Fort Smith, the intelligence and brains required to operate a University. In this way we will have achieved the complete circle of education I mentioned earlier. We will not see the College graduating students, or even providing instruction at the junior college level, for some years. But the ground-work has been laid and with this objective in mind we know it will come about because of the determination and dedication of His Excellency and the Oblate Fathers. And at this stage I can foresee that our College will be truly Northern, without regard to religion or race.

Speaking as a resident of Fort Smith, I am proud that this town has been selected as the site of Grandin College. It firmly establishes our community as the educational centre of the North. In my own opinion, this is the greatest single development in Fort Smith since its founding. Because not only today but tomorrow and in the years to come, as the College grows in size and stature, so will grow the stature and size of our town. We are integrally related to its growth, as it will provide another cornerstone upon which to build a better community.

We see the College as being part of Fort Smith; the students as residents of the town during the period of their stay with us. We hope we can welcome them into our homes and wherever possible participate in their activities. There is much to be gained on both sides. We think we can learn more about this country because of the students. We think we can help the students better to meet the problem they will have in future, if we have a common meeting ground — that is by involvement in the community on every possible level.

I would like to conclude my remarks by saying a few words to the young people who are attending Grandin College. Many of you come from backgrounds that are entirely different from those you will encounter in the future. You carry with you now and throughout your life the proud heritage of your race, be it Indian or Eskimo. You cannot, nor will you ever want to, forget the life of your fathers. In many ways you will have an easier life because you will not be faced with the problem of survival that plagued the generations before you. On the other hand, you will be taking on a tremendous responsibility — one which cannot be taken lightly — and I suggest that, because of this responsibility, your life may be more difficult than that of your fathers. In a few short years you will be among the trained leaders of the North. I have talked to many of you about your future and I know you will return to work with your people in many capacities, as teachers, nurses, engineers, and the many other occupations for which you will be trained. At the same time you must not forget that your future role encompasses not only work among *your* people, but also *our* people. In this way we can consider ourselves as residents of the Northwest Territories working together for the development of the physical and human resources of the Canadian Northland.

You are receiving in Grandin College a special kind of affection. Your supervisors have shown great understanding in helping you achieve the pride you have today. You will never forget the love and kindness shown to you by Father Pouchat, Sister De-coine, and those dedicated persons working with you. It will be up to you to ensure that their faith is justified. I am confident — as confident as I will ever be about anything — that this will happen.

Your Excellency, we earnestly ask Almighty God that He bestow on the staff and the students His

blessings for the success of the College. We salute you on your foresight in building Grandin College. We welcome it to the North and to Fort Smith. We look to the day when its achievements will be recognized throughout this wonderful nation of ours – Canada.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COLLEGE CREST

There is perhaps no better way to understand the aims and underlying spirit of Grandin College than by a study of the College Crest. Designed in three colours – white, the symbol of virtue; green, symbol of hope in life, temporal and eternal; gold, symbol of opportunity made available through education – the crest displays three Olympic torches, symbolizing the three ideals which the College hopes to impart: Leadership, Knowledge and Integrity. The three torches are carried by three hands representing the three main groups of the North – Indian, Eskimo and White.

The Cross symbolized Faith and the Christian principles on which the College was founded and on which its operations are based.

The motto: « Per Veritatem ad Lucem » restates the College symbols. Taken from St. John's Gospel, Ch. III, V. 21, it translates: « One who lives up to the Truth, comes to the Light ».